

# **EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

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## **REMARKS BY U.S. AMBASSADOR DAN MOZENA AT THE WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION ACT WORKSHOP**

**DHAKA  
AUGUST 13, 2012**

The Honorable Barrister Shafique Ahmed, Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs

Muhammad Zamir, Chief Information Commissioner

Ghulam Rahman, Chairman, Anti-Corruption Commission

Dr. Mizanur Rahman, Chairman, National Human Rights Commission

Distinguished guests, colleagues, friends

Corruption is insidious.

Corruption ... grand corruption, petty corruption ... eats the very fabric of society.

Corruption diminishes public infrastructure investment; corruption drives away private investment; corruption reduces the nation's economic growth rate; corruption impedes access to essential public services, especially by the poor.

Corruption diminishes citizens' quality of life.

Corruption is a monster that feeds on the people.

I hate corruption.

No nation, including my own, is immune from corruption, which is a global plague.

Bangladesh has engaged the battle against corruption. The Anti-Corruption Commission leads the way. Passage of the Right to Information law in 2009 was an important step forward in this fight. This milestone law guarantees citizens' access to public information. Last year's enactment of the Whistleblower Protection Act was another major step forward in the fight

against corruption. This new law empowers, encourages, and protects individuals who report wrongdoing on the part of government and non-government agencies or individuals.

I hope that Bangladesh will further strengthen its arsenal against corruption by enacting an Audit Act that will strengthen the independence and mandate of the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General. This, indeed, would be another big step forward in tackling corruption.

Laws such as the Right to Information, the Whistleblower Protection Act and, someday, the Audit Act are the foundations of the fight against corruption, but they are effective only to the extent that citizens know them, understand them, and trust them. For these laws to be effective, outreach campaigns and training exercises must help citizens learn how to use these new tools in challenging corruption. America and other friends of Bangladesh have partnered with the government to help get the word out.

America has partnered with the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General to present training workshops at the national and divisional levels to introduce the concept of public audit to over 800 members of the media, civil society, and public officials. America has trained over 700 members of the Comptroller and Auditor General Office staff so they can better explain to the public the Office's role in fighting corruption and how citizens and civil society can contribute to the battle.

America also partners with the Information Commission to create greater public awareness of citizens' right to access information. Already this partnership has trained over 900 journalists, civil society representatives and government officials on using the law to increase transparency and promote better performance by government agencies. America provides Information Technology support to the Information Commission so it can better implement the Right to Information law.

Today ... this conference is another example of America's partnering with Bangladesh ... this time the Anti-Corruption Commission ... to help tell the story of how the Whistle Blower Protection Act can be used to fight corruption. This workshop will make clear that the Whistleblower Protection Act empowers individuals to disclose information to authorities without risk of criminal, civil or departmental proceedings being initiated against the individual.

I am proud that America is Bangladesh's partner in the struggle against corruption. Each of us knows that this struggle will be long and hard, but I hope that step by step Bangladesh can begin to excise the cancer that is corruption. As corruption is reined in, I believe the wonderful

people of Bangladesh will see tangible improvements in the quality of their lives; I believe Bangladesh will become an ever more attractive investment destination setting the stage for Bangladesh to become the next Asian tiger, the Royal Bengal Tiger ... making real the vision we all share of the Middle-income Bangladesh, the Golden Bangladesh.

I believe that Bangladesh is at a critical juncture on the road to building the Golden Bangladesh. Waging and winning the war against corruption are essential. Be assured America will do its part to this end.

Thank you.

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